

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 09255 101319Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9856

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 9255

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS CINCPAC

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, XO, US, IN

SUBJECT: PROPOSED INDIAN OCEAN DEPLOYMENT

REF: STATE 161151

1. HAS ANYONE THOUGHT ABOUT THE PROPOSED DEPLOYMENT OF THE FOUR-SHIP TASK GROUP INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN JULY 17 IN CONNECTION WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION IN INDIA? IF NOT, I HOPE YOU WILL. THE DEPLOYMENT COULD NOT POSSIBLY COME AT A WORSE TIME. MRS. GANDHI IS ALREADY CHARGING THAT FOREIGN FORCES SUPPORTED THE "RIGHTIST" GROUPS AGAINST WHOM SHE DECLARED THE EMERGENCY, AND SOME OF HER PARTY MEMBERS ARE POINTING SPECIFICALLY TO THE CIA. MRS. GANDHI HAS IMPLIED THAT SHE BELIEVES THE USG OPPOSES HER ACTIONS (IN SPITE OF OUR "NO COMMENT" POSTURE). THE AMERICAN PRESS CRITICISM IS CITED BY SOME AS PROOF THAT THE US IS AGAINST THE EMERGENCY. WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF DRAWING DETAILED DIAGRAMS FOR THE GOI AT HIGHER LEVELS HERE OF HOW ALL THIS WILL AFFECT INDIA-US RELATIONS. A NAVAL ACTION LIKE THE ONE PROPOSED WILL TIE OUR HANDS. WHATEVER WE SAY, GIVEN THE TIMING MRS. GANDHI WILL SEE IT AS DIRECTED AGAINST INDIA. IT WILL REVIVE HER FEARS OF A "THREAT FROM THE SEA" (WHICH SHE HAS NOT TALKED ABOUT RECENTLY) AND WILL PROBABLY CONVINCE HER THAT WE REALLY ARE

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BEHIND THE RIGHTIST OPPOSITION LEADERS WHO SHE HAS JAILED

OR AT THE VERY LEAST THAT WE ARE RESORTING TO SOME BLATANT GUN BOAT DIPLOMACY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LAST TWO WEEKS IN INDIA. SHE CERTAINLY WON'T LISTEN TO ANY PROFESSIONS ON OUR PART OF AN INTEREST IN GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDIA.

2. I REALIZE THIS NAVAL OPERATION HAS PROBABLY BEEN UNDER PREPARATION FOR QUITE SOME TIME AND WILL BE BOTH DIFFICULT AND EXPENSIVE TO RESCHEDULE. I NEVERTHELESS STRONGLY URGE THAT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN POLITICAL CONCERNS MAY BE OVERRIDING AND THIS MAY BE ONE.

3. IN SHORT, IF WE'RE GOING TO CONTINUE TELLING THE GOI THAT GOOD RELATIONS MUST BE A TWO-WAY STREET, THEN WE'VE GOT TO DO OUR PART TOO. IF WE PLACE ANY VALUE ON GOOD RELATIONS WITH THIS, THE LARGEST AND MOST POWERFUL INDIAN OCEAN LITTORAL STATE, THEN WE SHOULD PROMPTLY RECONSIDER AND REVERSE THE DECISION TO DISPATCH THE TASK GROUP AT THIS TIME. I'M NOT ONE FOR GOING OUT OF OUR WAY TO BE NICE TO INDIA, BUT I THINK THIS IS A SITUATION WHERE WE MUST TAKE INDIAN REACTION INTO ACCOUNT OR WE'LL BE BACK WHERE WE WERE FOUR YEARS AGO.

4. I REQUEST THIS BE PASSED TO THE SECRETARY.
SAXBE

NOTE BY OC/T: NEW DELHI 9255 NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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NNN

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